



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNAIDS

UNHCR-UNICEF-WFP-UNDP-UNFPA
UNODC-ILO-UNESCO-WHO-WORLD BANK

AN EXCEPTIONAL RESPONSE TO AIDS



UNAIDS supports a more effective, comprehensive and coordinated global response to AIDS by providing:

- **LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY**
for effective action on the epidemic
- **STRATEGIC INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT**
to guide efforts against AIDS worldwide
- **TRACKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**
of the epidemic and of responses to it
- **CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**
- **MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES**
to support an effective response



Since AIDS was first recognized in 1981, more than 20 million people have died and tens of millions of people – increasingly women – have been infected with HIV. In 2004 almost 40 million men, women and children were living with HIV.

In the hardest-hit countries, AIDS dramatically reduces life expectancy and economic potential, increases the vulnerability of future generations by creating millions of orphans, threatens stability and security and diminishes the capacity of public and private sectors by killing people in the prime of their lives. In the most populous countries – including China, Indonesia and Russia – HIV is spreading rapidly.

Without sustained commitments to HIV prevention, care and treatment for all in need, AIDS will continue to have the upper hand, undermine development and outpace efforts to halt its spread.

Our Mission

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, **UNAIDS**, is the main advocate for accelerated, comprehensive and coordinated global action on the epidemic.

UNAIDS' mission is to lead, strengthen and support an expanded response to HIV and AIDS that includes preventing transmission of HIV, providing care and support to those already living with the virus, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV and alleviating the impact of the epidemic.



IN 2004 ALMOST 40 MILLION MEN,
WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE LIVING
WITH HIV.

UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS

In 2001, United Nations Member States met for the first-ever UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, recognizing that AIDS was a force so devastating it threatened global security. This session unanimously endorsed the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, committing the world to an unprecedented, comprehensive fight against the epidemic. The Declaration of Commitment was building on the Millennium Declaration adopted a year earlier, and the specific Millennium Development Goal of halting and reversing HIV and AIDS by 2015.



Seizing Opportunity

Despite the epidemic's spread, the world has unprecedented opportunities in the fight against AIDS.

Nearly two-thirds of all new infections expected this decade could be prevented by broadening existing prevention interventions to those who need them. We also have effective treatments that dramatically slow the progression of HIV. In countries that have wide access to antiretroviral drugs, AIDS deaths have fallen by as much as two-thirds each year since the mid-1990s.

Recent years have seen a greater global commitment to an effective response to the epidemic. Global funding for AIDS has increased 15-fold since UNAIDS was founded in 1996 – to an estimated US \$6.1 billion in 2004.



Overcoming Challenges

Despite these increased opportunities, the epidemic still outpaces progress. There is greater leadership and increased technical know-how but the challenges now are to ensure proven interventions are implemented to a large enough scale.

Globally, fewer than one in five people at risk of infection have meaningful access to prevention services and fewer than one in 10 people infected with HIV receive antiretroviral treatment.

UNAIDS works for a stronger, sustained and more effective effort against AIDS. Priorities include scaling up proven prevention, treatment and impact-mitigation strategies in all affected countries and working with partners towards greater efficiency in the AIDS response with an emphasis on 'making the money work'.

AIDS – a Formidable Challenge to Human Life and Dignity

The UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS states that "HIV/AIDS constitutes a global emergency and one of the most formidable challenges to human life and dignity, as well as to the effective enjoyment of human rights, which undermines social and economic development throughout the world and affects all levels of society – national, community, family and individual."

As a direct response to specific commitments and objectives outlined in the Declaration of Commitment, UNAIDS set up an Office on AIDS, Security and Humanitarian Response. The Office works to integrate HIV prevention and AIDS care in countries affected by conflict and peacekeeping operations, with particular attention to uniformed services, vulnerable populations and humanitarian workers.



UNAIDS: Driving a Unique, Multi-Stakeholder Response

The UN's response to AIDS formally began in 1986, when the Global Programme on AIDS was established at the World Health Organization (WHO). As the epidemic expanded and evolved, it became increasingly clear that an unprecedented effort extending beyond the health sector would be required to address the growing global crisis.

Today, ten UN agencies sponsor the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. They include:

- **OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**
- **UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)**
- **WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**
- **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)**
- **UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)**
- **UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)**
- **INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)**
- **UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**
- **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**
- **THE WORLD BANK**

Most of the Joint UN Programme's work is at country level. It is here that UNAIDS coordinates all AIDS-related activities undertaken by the UN system. UNAIDS Country Coordinators facilitate the work of United Nations Theme Groups on HIV and AIDS – the joint



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AIDS policy and strategy decision-making body for Cosponsors and other UN system agencies at country level. There are UN Theme Groups in more than 130 countries. UNAIDS also provides strategic assistance and works with governments, civil society and other partners in support of more effective and efficient action.

The Secretariat is currently increasing its country-level presence to ensure that the Joint Programme can fulfill its critical core functions, especially in monitoring and evaluation, resource mobilization, and social mobilization.

The Three Ones – Effective Action in Countries

As the response expands, so do the number of actors and the resources available. While more resources are still needed, there is an equally urgent need for smarter and more coordinated support to

avoid duplication and fragmentation. To address this challenge, in 2004 UNAIDS supported discussion among the governments of affected countries, leading bilateral donors and multilateral organizations towards a set of guiding principles for harmonized action known as the “Three Ones”.

The Three Ones call for a single agreed national AIDS action framework to guide the activities of diverse stakeholders; one national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; and one agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system.





Preventing New HIV Infections

There is clear evidence on how best to prevent HIV transmission, including: the effectiveness of interventions to change sexual behaviours; the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections that encourage the spread of HIV; programmes to reduce risk and harm among injecting drug users; blood safety and infection control measures to prevent blood-borne transmission; and initiatives to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission.

While many countries have made major progress towards curbing the spread of HIV, the epidemic continues to expand because proven prevention measures do not reach most of those in need.

To address the shortcomings of current prevention efforts, UNAIDS is prioritizing prevention advocacy, coordination and action, enabling each Cosponsoring organization to strengthen its HIV prevention leadership.

For example UNFPA monitors the global condom gap, supports innovative prevention programmes in low-income countries, and advocates for greater global attention to the prevention needs of women and young people.

Through advocacy, strategic information, the development of new partnerships and innovative programmes, UNODC draws attention to the urgent need for enhanced prevention measures for injecting drug users.

UNICEF supports prevention initiatives caring for orphans and vulnerable children.

Through standard development, advocacy and assistance to countries, UNHCR seeks to protect and promote the human rights of people who are especially vulnerable to infection.

Preventive education is at the top of UNESCO's agenda. Preventive education works to make people aware of why and how they are at risk of HIV infection, and how to reduce the risk.

WHO leads the health sector response in ensuring that effective prevention approaches are fully integrated into health systems.

UNAIDS WORKS FOR A STRONGER, SUSTAINED AND MORE EFFECTIVE EFFORT AGAINST AIDS.

Expanding Antiretroviral Treatment Access

UNAIDS supports the delivery of antiretroviral treatment in low-income countries and has been fully committed to making universal access a reality since it was established in 1996. UNAIDS sponsored early projects that demonstrated conclusively that delivering treatment in poorer areas was feasible. Through the Accelerating Access Initiative, UNAIDS negotiated sharp price reductions in HIV medications from

leading pharmaceutical manufacturers. In 2001, spurred by the advocacy of people living with HIV, the entire global community formally recognized in the Declaration of Commitment the right of all people living with HIV in low-income countries to care and treatment. As a result of negotiated price cuts, the emergence of generic manufacturers, and the leadership of civil society organizations, the annual cost of treating an individual infected with HIV declined by more than 90% between 2000 and 2003.

The financial and scientific means are now available to provide care and treatment to all people living with HIV. But scaling up has been slow. While some six million people needed treatment by December 2004, only about 700,000 had access to it.

The UNAIDS family is working collectively to help countries make treatment generally available to three million people by 2005.





WHO is working to broaden the availability of HIV treatment by providing guidance on the selection of first-line therapies, initiating treatment, and patient monitoring. WHO pre-certifies drugs, including generics, that meet rigorous safety and efficacy criteria and provides pricing information that enables countries to deliver antiretroviral treatment to as many eligible people as possible. To overcome the capacity barriers that impede treatment scale-up, WHO is spearheading efforts to train health care workers in the delivery of these drugs.

While WHO, on behalf of UNAIDS, is leading UN efforts to expand HIV treatment access, every part of UNAIDS is participating in the global drive to provide treatment to those in need. ILO, for example, is working with employees, workers and governments to ensure maximum support for broad availability of treatment in the workplace. ILO's Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the

World of Work states that employees living with HIV should receive the same standard of medical care as workers with non-HIV-related health conditions.

In addition to preserving the lives of those already infected, the growing momentum for treatment access in developing countries offers critical opportunities to strengthen HIV prevention. Treatment access helps reduce stigma, provides new incentives to learn one's HIV status, and attracts individuals to health care services.



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Diminishing the Epidemic's Impact

The impact of AIDS is unprecedented, especially in countries where it hits hardest. In southern Africa, life expectancy has sharply declined, with enormous effects on the current and future size and structure of national populations. Millions of households are being devastated by the epidemic, with the most significant impact typically visited on women and children.

By 2010, Africa will be home to 18 million AIDS orphans. Despite this unfolding catastrophe for the continent's youth, 39% of countries with generalized epidemics lacked national policies in 2003 to provide essential support to orphans and other children made vulnerable by the epidemic. With leadership from UNICEF, the Joint Programme has provided countries with effective action for addressing the rising number of AIDS orphans.

AIDS also undermines education, as teachers die prematurely and children in HIV-affected households are forced to drop out of school. Working directly with national education ministries, UNESCO leads UNAIDS' efforts to lessen the epidemic's impact on education.

AIDS also intensifies chronic food shortages, hitting already-poor families the hardest. This creates a vicious circle for communities as a shortage of good nutrition helps speed up the progression of HIV disease in those infected. WFP is working to lessen the effects of food shortages on those already made more vulnerable to HIV through food insecurity.





Mobilizing Sufficient Resources

UNAIDS provides global leadership in tracking spending on AIDS in low- and middle-income countries and in projecting future resource needs. Working with economic experts and collaborating partners, UNAIDS estimates that US \$6.1 billion was available in 2004 for the AIDS response – a vast improvement over the US \$300 million spent in 1996, when UNAIDS first came into existence.

Despite the encouraging growth in financial resources for AIDS, current spending levels are far short of what is needed to mount a comprehensive response.

UNAIDS is intensifying efforts to generate the resources needed to reverse the epidemic. The World Bank is one of the largest single providers of financial assistance for AIDS programmes in developing countries. Through its Multicountry AIDS Programme – MAP – the Bank has allocated more than US \$1 billion in assistance in sub-Saharan Africa and more than US \$150 million for countries



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in the Caribbean, with support for the poorest countries coming in the form of 100% grants.

Efforts by UNAIDS were critical to the timely establishment in December 2002 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a new financial mechanism to leverage additional resources for AIDS.

As of November 2004, the Global Fund had approved US \$3 billion for 318 grants in 128 countries, with 60% of funding supporting HIV-related activities. In addition to helping countries develop and implement proposals to the Global Fund, UNAIDS provides extensive technical support and advice to the Fund's Secretariat.

UNAIDS also assists countries as they seek to mobilize human resources, reorganize institutional systems, develop policies that integrate AIDS into Poverty Reduction Strategies, and assemble the capacities and technical assistance they need to confront the epidemic.





A MULTISECTORAL RESPONSE

In addition to supporting the effectiveness of the UN system and working closely with AIDS-related civil society and people living with HIV, UNAIDS is also firmly committed to engaging non-traditional partners in fighting AIDS. Key constituents mobilized since 1996 include the media, faith-based organizations, business, sports organizations, uniformed services, and the labour movement. All have been supported by the Joint UN Programme's expertise in promoting and supporting innovative action to fight the spread of HIV and relieve the impact of AIDS.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

UNAIDS believes that working closely with people living with HIV is essential to an effective response – recognizing that the most inspirational leaders are people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. In 1994, at the Paris AIDS Summit, 42 governments declared that the principle of Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS was critical to the AIDS response. UNAIDS remains committed to the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS and seeks to ensure that people living with HIV are at the heart of all activity.



STOPPING THE SPREAD OF HIV REQUIRES A COORDINATED MULTISECTORAL GLOBAL RESPONSE ON A SCALE EQUAL TO THAT OF THE DISEASE ITSELF.

WORKING WITH THE WORLD AIDS CAMPAIGN

Stopping the spread of HIV requires a coordinated multisectoral global response on a scale equal to that of the disease itself. UNAIDS and the World AIDS Campaign have forged a unique and close partnership in support of a common concern that civil society must play a more active role in holding governments accountable to the targets set by the Declaration of Commitment. As a civil society-driven campaign, the World AIDS Campaign provides a platform for all sectors to take action within their respective constituencies to attain these targets.

GLOBAL COALITION ON WOMEN AND AIDS

To address the increasing vulnerability of women in the face of AIDS, UNAIDS launched the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS in 2004, bringing together leading women and men committed to improving the lives of women and girls worldwide. The Coalition's efforts focus on preventing new infections among women and girls, promoting equal access to HIV care and treatment, accelerating microbicides research, protecting women's property and inheritance rights, and reducing violence against women.

**AIDS POSES AN EXCEPTIONAL THREAT TO HUMANITY.
THE RESPONSE TO AIDS NEEDS TO BE EQUALLY EXCEPTIONAL.**



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Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
UNAIDS • 20, Avenue Appia • 1211 Geneva 27 • Switzerland

Tel: (+41 22) 791 3666 Fax: (+41 22) 791 4187
e-mail: unaids@unaids.org • internet: www.unaids.org

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